

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

# AIRGRAM

770065-0821 R

FOR RM USE ONLY

|      |      |      |
|------|------|------|
| RM   | REP  | AF   |
| ARA  | EUR  | FE   |
| NEA  | CU   | INR  |
| E    | P/R  | IO   |
| L    | FBO  | AIC  |
| AGR  | COM  | FRR  |
| INT  | LAB  | TAH  |
| TR   | XMB  | AIR  |
| ARMY | CIA  | NAVY |
| OSD  | USIA | NSA  |

A-44

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

TO Department of State  
 DEPT PASS: MEXICO, SAN SALVADOR, MANAGUA, GUATEMALA  
 SAN JOSE, USCINCSO  
 EO 11652: N/A  
 TAGS: GT, PINS, SHUM, PORS  
 FROM Amembassy GUATEMALA  
 SUBJECT Monthly Report on Political Violence and Human Rights:  
 REF

REVIEWED BY *CAF* DATE *06/07/81*  
 RDS ☐ or XDS ☐ EXT. DATE  
 TS AUTH. REASON: April 23/1997  
 ENDORSE EXISTING MARKINGS ☐  
 DECLASSIFIED BY *25/177*  
 RELEASE DENIED ☐  
 PA or FOI EXEMPTIONS

SUMMARY: There were only 21 incidents of probable political violence in March, continuing a trend of decreased violence that began in October 1976. Police overreaction to a peaceful consumer demonstration in Quezaltenango led to the death of one university student. The EGP bombed the car of an industrialist involved in a labor dispute and took credit for two south coast attacks. El Quiché was quiet. END SUMMARY

The number of press reported incidents of probable political violence declined from 23 in February to 21 in March, the 6th consecutive month that the number of incidents has remained below 30. The 21 incidents include 14 murders, 5 incidents of burning, 1 wounding and 1 bombing attack.

The incident that drew the most attention was the March 4 killing of a university student in Quezaltenango, following a demonstration to protest an increase in electricity rates. The demonstration, which included many university students, was peaceful and orderly. However, a newly organized unit of riot police that, as a precautionary measure, had been sent that day to Quezaltenango, over-reacted and tried to disperse the demonstrators with tear gas. The police cleared the central plaza, but some university students began breaking windows and smashing signs in the downtown area. Several hours later the army was called in. At some point one student was killed.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

77 MAR 23 AM 8 21

FADRC/DA/WC

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

FOR DEPT. USE ONLY

FORM DS-323

☐ In ☐ Out

Drafted by POL:RES/der:mej

Contents and Classification Approved by: DCM:GRANDREWS

Clearances: POL:GFJones

POL-I:WETHomas

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

Guatemala A-44 2

automobile of a Greek industrialist who is resisting organization of a union in his factory, a right, says the EGP, "recognized even by the laws of the rich." This is the second time the EGP has involved itself in an urban labor dispute.

In a second bulletin the EGP admitted culpability for "a series of incidents of sabotage" on March 16 against south coast cotton growers, whom the EGP accused of exploiting their campesino workers. In fact, there were 2 press reported incidents that day involving groups of armed men. In one case they burned a tractor and its load of cotton, and in the second case they burned 2,000 rubber trees and 400 coffee trees.

It is interesting to observe here that the EGP has allied itself with the workers against their urban or rural employers in several cases, but in none of them has the EGP gone beyond destruction of physical property -- cars, crops or facilities. The EGP is apparently reserving their ultimate weapon, murder, for individuals who have themselves been involved in violence.

There were a total of 16 incidents of burning on the south coast this past month, down from 26 in February and 20 in January. Using the 30% estimate explained in last month's report, the EGP is credited for a total of five incidents, i.e. three in addition to the two discussed above.

One incident not included in the March statistics because there is nothing solid enough to warrant placing a political label on it, but which is nevertheless puzzling, is the March 12 disappearance of three employees of the Agricultural Development Bank (BANDESA). All three were bodyguards for BANDESA Deputy Director Jose Miguel Gaitan who is also Secretary of the National Reconstruction Committee. They were returning, probably intoxicated, from a party given them by Gaitan, when they disappeared. One of the missing men is the son of a former Chief of Detectives.

Of the 21 incidents, seven, including five killings, occurred in Guatemala Department. Nine, including the five incidents of burning and four killings, occurred on the south coast. The other five incidents occurred in Izabal, Jutiapa, Zacapa, and Quezaltenango. As in February there were no known incidents in El Quiché.

Gr 17  
BOSTER

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE